

BMCW BUZZ

BMCW Implements Workforce Committee Suggestions from Staff

The Workforce Steering Committee is now in Phase 3 and looking at new strategies to improve staff recruitment and retention within the BMCW. Contact any of the members listed with your suggestions. At this time, the committee would like to update you on the status of past recommendations that were put forward to BMCW and CEO leadership.

Recommendations from 2006

Provide a room on the first floor at Children's Court Center for BMCW staff.

A room is provided on the second floor, and although small, it does not seem to be over-utilized. There were reports that the paging system could not be heard there, but that is no longer an issue. The Court has wireless internet access; however, the signal is not strong in all parts of the building. Access to electrical outlets is limited, so staff are reminded to charge their computer battery before going to the Court complex. BMCW management will continue to make the Court aware of staff needs as they are identified so that improvements can be made as part of the regular building upgrades.

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Workforce Steering Committee

Angela Gunn, La Causa/OCM mentor, co-chair

Suzanne Zipperer, BMCW Communication Specialist, co-chair

Amy Friesema, CSSW

April Behounek, CFCP/OCM

Tanya Bitter-Schnell, CFCP/OCM mentor

John Bradtke, CFCP, Dir. of Operations

Beverly Jenkins, PEM

Jessie Nelson, CSSW, Quality & Development Manager

Mary Kennedy, BMCW Program Coordinator

Linda Knors, BMCW Access

Darlene Kuhn, La Causa

Merranda Houston, CSSW

Rhonda Moore, CSSW

Allison Schaper, La Causa/OCM

Sonja Sundgaard, La Causa/SS

Theresa Hensler, CSSW

Unya Collazo, CSSW

Denise Wolodko, MCWPPD-UWM

Foster Youth Speaks at National Conference

Ashley S. Stokes was one of six Wisconsin youth to attend the national conference for youth in out-of-home care "Destination Future" in Washington D.C. August 14-17. Ashley, an 18-year-old student at New School for Community Service in Milwaukee, was part of the Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council for foster care. She participated on a panel of ten youth who spoke to an audience of 300 youth, social workers, government officials, and advocates at the conference.

The focus of the panel was to share information about out-of-home care in other states. Some differences Ashley found intriguing were:

- In Oklahoma, foster care extends to the age of 23, which gives youth a chance to get a good start in life.
- Medical insurance for foster youth in some states extends to 25. Wisconsin's new BadgerCare Plus extends coverage from 18 to 21.



Eighteen-year-old Ashley Stokes represented Wisconsin's youth in foster care at a national conference in Washington D.C. Ms. Stokes joined a panel of 10 who addressed an audience of more than 300.

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From the Director

With the new Department of Children and Families, we will see greater cooperation between divisions that serve many of the same families. Most frequently this involves Wisconsin Works (W2). This program is now under the new Division of Family and Economic Security within DCF, having been moved from the Department of Workforce Development.



The Bureau and the Milwaukee W2 agency leadership meet monthly to improve communication and identify joint strategies to strengthen service delivery to families involved with child welfare and W2.

As part of our joint efforts, we have established a memorandum of understanding that outlines our working relationship. In each service region, the child welfare lead agency and the W2 agency provider will implement a coordination plan that describes how they will work together to serve families involved in both systems.

We have developed and are implementing monthly family data matching to determine if new families entering the child welfare system are also involved in W2 to coordinate services and expectations. We are implementing procedures to notify W2 representatives of the coordinated service team meetings and maximize their participation and training W2 staff on the purpose and protocol for these meetings. All staff from the two programs are cross-trained.

State-employed managers from BMCW, Corrections, public health, W2 and the Milwaukee Service Integration Office meet bi-monthly to coordinate leadership efforts.

As we move forward, our hope is to improve the understanding all staff have of the role each program plays in the life of our families. Such an approach not only makes sense from the point of utilizing resources, but also ensures families have the services they need and can meet their obligations without being over-burdened by the demands of multiple programs.

Finally, let's remember that November is National Adoption Month. We will be celebrating at Milwaukee County Children's Court on November 21, 8:30 to 11:00. All are welcome to attend.

Denise Revels Robinson

Loan Forgiveness for Child Welfare Workers Proposed

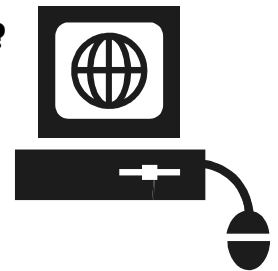
The House and Senate have both passed higher education student loan bills that include language on loan forgiveness for child welfare workers. There are important differences between the two bills as to who will qualify. This is something you will want to read about and ask your representative to support. Learn more at the National Association of Social Workers Advocacy blog:

<http://www.socialworkblog.org/advocacy/index.php/2007/08/21/support-loan-forgiveness-provisions-for-child-welfare-workers/>

(or search "child welfare loan forgiveness")

Are You Using Your Electronic Resources?

By the end of the year, **BMCW will have its own intranet pages** on the DCF intranet. This will allow us to have more frequent updates to initiatives, links to community resources, and other important information always easily accessible.



Are you making use of the current electronic resources? For example, the **BMCW Procedure Manual** is accessible through an icon on your desktop. DCF no longer issues paper memos, but instead notifies you by email of **changes to policy and procedure statewide**. Did you take time to read the recent one listing most frequently asked questions about BadgerCare? (Sent September 23, 2008, if you missed it.) And don't forget the **BMCW's web site**, which includes information on new initiatives, reports to the community, and contact information for BMCW partner agencies.

The **eWiSACWIS Knowledge Base** provides information about how to use this complex system. It is accessible from your computer desktop.

A statewide **Child Welfare Manual** is in the making. This project will incorporate state standards, policy, and practice to provide you with guidance in performing your duties as a child welfare professional. The electronic manual will be electronically searchable.

BMCW Buzz Newsletter Committee

Lisa Adee, IA, Region 3
 Veronica Kirk, CFCP Safety Services
 Lynn Bade, CFCP/OCM, Region 2
 April Lowther, CFCP/OCM, Region 1
 Robyn Hitchman, CSSW/FCA
 Jayne Oliver, Administration Office
 Angela Pullam, CFCP/OCM, Region 2
 Maria Rentas-Rodriguez, La Causa OCM/Safety Services, Region 3
 Linda Thomas, IA, Region 1
 Suzanne Zipperer, Administration Office



Careers Advance with MSW Options

The **Child Welfare Training Program** at UWM (also known as the Title IV-E stipend program) provides financial assistance to staff in the Bureau and partner agencies who want to earn a MSW degree. All staff received an email: Title IV-E MSW Program on September 9, 2008 that provides information on the program and how to apply.

Staff members interested in the part-time component of the program had to apply by October 17th. Those interested in the full-time program must apply to the UWM Graduate School by January 1st and to the Child Welfare Training Program (CWTP) by February 15th.

Some questions about the program have recently been raised, and Profs. Steve McMurtry and Susan Rose, co-directors of the program at UWM, have provided the following answers:

Q. *Can you tell me how people register for the Certification courses?*

A. This question arises from the fact that the four courses in Year 1 of the part-time component of the CWTP are the same as those needed for certification by staff members who don't have a social work degree. The primary purpose of the CWTP is to help staff members get the MSW degree. We usually have 15 openings each year for new applicants in the part-time component, and those who want to earn the MSW are given preference in the selection process. If some slots remain after these applicants are accepted, we will consider applications from employees who only want to complete the four classes needed for certification. If you are not accepted into the CWTP, talk with your CEO or human resources representative, as some agencies offer limited financial help for taking the certification courses outside the CWTP.

Q. *I am interested in applying for the full-time stipend program next year. If I do this, does the BMCW allow you to work part time in your current position while going to school full time? I ask this because \$1,100*

would not be enough for me to pay my monthly bills and I would plan on working part time while attending school. I'm also a little confused about the difference between the advanced and standard status. If you are an advanced student, do you only do 20 hours/week of field work for three semesters as opposed to six semesters as a standard student? I have graduated with my BSW in the last 5

years, so I believe I would be eligible for this. How many classes do you need to take a semester to be considered full time?

A. The full-time component of the CWTP is the only option available to staff who have earned a BSW within the past five years, so that is the program you should choose. Students in this group can finish the program

in 15 months (because their recent BSW qualifies them for advanced standing), and they will start in June 2009 and graduate in August 2010. During that time, they will complete field internship courses for about 20 hours per week in the Fall 2009, Spring 2010, and Summer 2010 semesters. They will not be able to continue working at their current agency during those 15 months; but as long as they make acceptable grades, they can work elsewhere for up to 20 hours per week. The stipend they will receive to help with living expenses is currently \$1,160 per month, and their tuition will be covered as well (along with an allotment for book costs).

Q. *I graduated in 2002 with a BSW. If we start the part-time program, can we move to the full-time program then in 2009?*

A. Since your BSW degree was earned more than five years ago, you don't qualify for advanced standing and would have to complete either the 4-year part-time component or 2-year full-time component of the CWTP. You can apply for either. We typically do not allow students to switch from the part-time program to the full-time program, as the sequence of classes between the two doesn't make that possible.



National Conference Focused on Workforce

By Jessie Nelson, Quality and Development Manager,
Children's Service Society of Wisconsin

On August 5-6, 2008, OCM Program Manager Charity Douglas and HR Consultant Tim Faulks from Children's Family and Community Partnerships and I had the opportunity to attend the "Scaling the Summit Conference" in Denver, Colorado. The conference focused on child welfare workforce issues.



Present at the conference were representatives and teams from many states who had rich experiences in implementing workforce interventions. About two years ago, the federal Children's Bureau Recruitment and Retention Project gave several grants to organizations around the country to create change in their child welfare systems. Many of the presentations were done by the grantees who shared their program plans and successes in improving workforce recruitment and retention.

There were a few key concepts from the conference that I thought were worth sharing. Child welfare professionals stay in their field and at their organizations because:

- The organizational culture speaks to their hearts;
- Success in the work is defined by real child and family specific outcomes; and
- The organizations values mirror core social work values.

Some of the critical topics discussed at the conference were:

- Building an agency culture that encourages retention;
- Finding the right match in recruitment and screening personnel and training, supervising for recruitment and retention;
- Professional development for supervisors, and
- Workload analysis.

If you are interested in receiving any of the materials from this conference please contact Jessie Nelson at CSSW.

Workforce Initiatives

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Create and implement staff morale and recognition plans for all program areas.

Private partner agencies, as well as region managers, created and are implementing recognition plans. If you would like to help plan recognition events see your program manager/supervisor.

Develop Professional Development Plans (PDP) to ensure a transfer of learning.

PDPs were put into place in 2007. UWM is currently providing technical assistance to supervisors to ensure there is follow-up after the plans are implemented.

Provide access to juvenile CCap records so that background checks can be conducted on youth in a timely manner before placing children in a home.

Legislation was passed, but the bill was not signed into law. The Governor supports giving child welfare staff access to these records for specific purposes, but DAs and other lawyers statewide weighed in on the language used in the bill and found it to be too broad. New language will be drafted in the next legislative session. An interim agreement is being developed between the Court and BMCW enabling BMCW to get information on juveniles in a timely manner as needed during regular work hours.

Implement a Multi-Disciplinary Partnership Team approach to ensure knowledge transfer and communication across program areas.

A memo was issued November 22, 2006 and was put into place; however, the effort did not continue. At the September meeting, the Steering Committee decided to get feedback from staff who participated in the teams and determine if the idea should be renewed.

To promote visibility in the community, staff members be allowed to represent the BMCW and use its logo for approved community events.

A memo and procedure was issued October 26, 2006; however, staff have not been requesting approval for events and there is no longer a committee. At the August 14, 2008 meeting, the Steering Committee recommended the information be reissued and that one point person gain approval and pass the information to all staff. Since most events have online registration, this

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will be efficient. The event can be posted on the BMCW intranet pages, which will be set up soon. Buttons with the BMCW logo are available for event participants.

Expand internships and field placement to 2 in IA, 2 per region in OCM, 2 in Licensing and 1 per region in Safety Services.

A memo was issued October 20 2006 implementing this in cooperation with UWM Helen Bader School of Social Welfare. The Steering Committee will look into working with other universities to offer an array of educational experiences that may help with recruitment.

2007 recommendations

Create specialized units for Wrap teens and other cases.

BMCW management is working on implementing such specialized units. More information will be provided as the project advances.

Provide training on crisis counseling to staff who then become peer counselors.

A new workgroup is being formed to look into this. Anyone interested should call April Behounek.

Change policy for FISS to be accessed before Initial Assessment cases are closed.

The FISS project manager is working with region managers on how this can be implemented and examining the contract to see if language in it needs to be changed.

Have UWM provide classes or a certification in child welfare at the bachelor's level.

The steering committee recommended that BMCW begin to work with the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare to develop classes, including one particularly teaching about child welfare in Milwaukee County and the BMCW. The idea is being explored.

IA service managers should approve all assessments within 48 hours and close cases within 72 hours of getting them from the IA social worker.

This will become part of BMCW policy.

BMCW work with Family Court to designate a BMCW-Family Court liaison who could be contacted directly for an immediate response to custody issues.

A memo went to all staff July 8, 2008 that designated the point person to assist BMCW staff with Family Court related issues as Susan Medina. She can be reached at 257-7990.

The process for case transfers from IA to Ongoing and Safety be clarified and enhanced to include the PCFA of process and reduce redundancy of job tasks.

In-services regarding the PCFA process, which will include case transfer, will take place in October. A job aid that lists transfer tasks will be distributed to help staff include all essential information when transferring cases.

Assess how staff can be assisted with clerical work, such as mailing, copying, etc., and help staff learn how to use the computer technology to make clerical tasks easier.

This is being done at an agency level. Any suggestions as to how clerical staff can further assist should be referred to the agency director.

Ongoing case managers will be able to transfer cases under circumstances where they feel they are no longer effective with the family.

This was clarified as something that has always been available and will continue to be under select circumstances. A procedure of approval was determined unnecessary.

Program support staff will attend the Introduction to BMCW and also introductory classes for the program area where they work.

All new support staff and any support staff who feel they need to know more about the BMCW or their program area may attend training.



Cook. . . Eat . . . Win The 1st Annual BMCW Cook Off

Staff bureau-wide are invited to join in the BMCW Cook-off.

- **Sign up to enter your best bread, soup, or dessert at your office location November 20th- December 20th.**
- **The Cook-off will be held January 28, 2009 at each location, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**
- **Winners from the building competitions will advance to the state level at Teutonia Ave. February 11th.**

If you don't cook, be sure to come eat and vote. All funds collected will go to future BMCW events. Watch for more information.

Rough Riders Revving Up

VROOM! Did you see the gnarly Buell Blast motorcycle in CSSW's parking lot? Wait, did you see the blue or white one?

Driven by a sense of adventure and the rising cost of gas, both **Pam Cotton** and **Pennie Felton** signed up for motorcycle safety courses this summer and subsequently bought bikes. What started as a casual conversation about motorcycles became a spirited, competitive race to the finish to get safely licensed and hit the streets of Milwaukee (Who won? You'll have to ask them).

Naturally, the next step was to start a motorcycle gang. We'll leave you to wonder about the name, but we would like to add more members. Child welfare experience is not required, but a sense of humor is a must! Send letters of interest, along with a photo of you and your motorcycle to Pam or Pennie in the BMCW interoffice mail.



Relative Search Specialist Added to Staff at CSSW

Children's Service Society of Wisconsin has created a new position within the Placement Unit called the relative search specialist.

Julie Bischoff has been hired to fill this role.

Julie's primary function is to explore relative placement options for newly detained children residing in assessment homes. Julie works with staff on cases that they refer to her for assistance in locating and working with relatives.



Julie Bischoff is the relative search specialist at CSSW.

Julie will review eWISACWIS records, attend family meetings, staffings, and home visits and talk with biological parents to gather information about relatives. She will pre-screen any identified relatives to find out their interest, willingness, and ability for placement and pass that information along to the ongoing case managers and permanency consultants for final assessment.

If you have any questions, please feel free to give her a call at 231-4975.



UnitedHealthcare Employees Donate

Employees of UnitedHealthcare of Wauwatosa donated 100 decorated shoe boxes of items for children entering out-of-home care. The boxes contained such items as hygiene products, toys, and pajamas appropriate for different age groups.

Shown in the photo are Wendy Collins, Community Relations UnitedHealthcare (left) and Region Manager Carolyn Lee with the boxes. More than \$2,000 worth of items were collected.

CFCP Staff Give Above and Beyond Work Day

Tons of Tabs

The Children's Family and Community Partnerships (CFCP) Diversity Committee participated in the Ronald McDonald House "Pop Tab Collection Program." The Program collects tabs year around and in May holds a "Pop Tab Dump Day" and uses funds from the aluminum for House operations and supplies. The committee might not have taken in "tons" of tabs but *did* collect 25 pounds of them. Teams competed and the top five winning teams:

1 st Place	Dick Kubacki
2 nd Place	Marcus Martin
3 rd Place	Toni Bartz
4 th Place	Sara Waldschmidt
5 th Place	Brit Williams-Van Klooster

To learn more about the Tabs Program, visit the Ronald McDonald House web site and choose "pop tabs."

The CFCP Diversity Committee explores and celebrates the many cultures and differences that make each of us unique.

New Division Administrator Knows Milwaukee Well

BMCW is fortunate to have a Milwaukee resident and experienced child advocate as the new administrator for the Division of Safety and Permanence, of which the BMCW is part.

Cyrus Behroozi was appointed as the Administrator for the Division in July.

Behroozi came to this position after being the director of Child Advocacy at the Task Force on Family Violence, specializing in the protection of children. His primary responsibility was to train and manage advocates as they provided child victims and parents with safety planning, resource referral, case management services, and advocacy.



*Division of Safety and Permanence Administrator
Cyrus Behroozi is a Milwaukee resident.*

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Clothing Drives Prepare Families for School and Winter

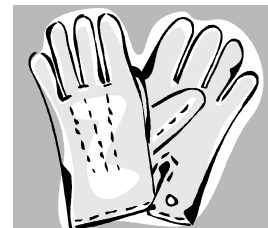
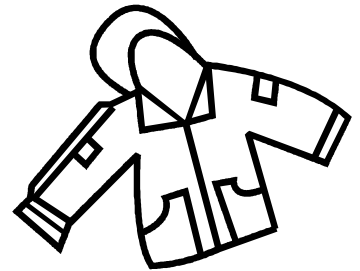
Children's Family and Community Partnerships Diversity Committee hosted a back-to-school clothing drive on Saturday, August 23, 2008. The event was held at the Greater St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church at 2741 N. 27th Street starting at 10:00 a.m. Area businesses posted flyers and community response was overwhelming. All of the clothing was distributed to the community with appreciation and thanks to those who contributed.

Sincere thanks go out to all of the employees of CFCP who donated an enormous amount of gently used clothing. Many devoted workers stayed after hours

to fold, sort and organize the clothing. Members of the committee include **Marcus Martin, Pat Taylor, Deb Guillermo, Georgia Isaac, Angela Tripp, Joann Burton, Debbie Gillespie, Sarah Padgett, Ressie Jackson, Krashanda Cleveland, Chiqueta Patterson, Doris Callahan, Paula Bynum, Jennifer Mosher, Debbie Gillespie, Jennifer Wozniczka and Linda Hively.**

A special acknowledgement and thanks also goes out to Community Liaison Officers Bell and Strache and the **Milwaukee Police Department**, District 4, for their generous donation of school supplies. Numerous children of the community were delighted to receive back packs, book bags, notebooks, pens, pencils, binders and folders.

CFCP's Diversity Committee also organized a winter coat drive for Saturday, October 25th at St. Luke's Missionary Baptist Church on 27th Street just north of Center Street. Items included gently used winter coats, hats, mittens, gloves, scarves and sweaters.



Ashley Stokes

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- Many states struggle with placing siblings together; but some have been successful by using a group home model where siblings stay together with a professional foster parent.
- Some states have 1-800 numbers where youth can call to find out about state services.

Ashley said she was not nervous about speaking to such a large group, "I think I have an interesting story and I don't mind sharing it." In addition to the conference activities, the youth did some site-seeing, were entertained, and had time to meet each other. "I liked meeting the other youth and hearing their stories," Ashley said.

Ashley plans to go to college and study business management so she can operate a group home.

Cyrus Behrooz

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Behrooz served as a member of the Milwaukee County Child Abuse Review Team and assisted on the development of the joint protocol for investigation of child abuse cases that coordinates the work of law enforcement, children protective services, the medical community, and public schools.

He also serves on the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board. and the Wisconsin Court Appointed Special Advocate Association board. He also worked as an attorney with Legal Action of Wisconsin where he litigated cases of domestic violence and child abuse.

The Division of Safety and Permanence includes statewide child welfare, adoption, and foster care program, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and Indian Child Welfare.

Practice Tip

How to Access BMCW Legal Counsel

BMCW legal counsel, Barbara Reinhold, is available to assist staff with preparing difficult cases for court and other legal matters.



The procedure for seeking advice from legal counsel is set through the BMCW administration to require advance approval by a program manager or, in the case of state staff, through a region manager, so that program management staff can first sort out programmatic issues from legal issues.

The general procedure is that if a contract agency staff social worker believes that they need legal assistance, he or she must first discuss the issue with his or her program manager who will then decide if legal consultation is needed. If it is, either the program manager will contact legal counsel or will give permission to the social worker to contact legal counsel directly.

In the case of state staff, the social worker must first discuss the issue with his or her region manager who will make the decision as to whether legal consultation is needed.

CSSW has an arrangement with legal counsel that the BMCW attorney is available two half-days a month to staff cases at CSSW. Workers are expected to get approval from their program managers before signing up for an appointment. CSSW asked for this arrangement because in many of the cases in which they need assistance (such as foster care licensing denials and revocations) there is no assistant district attorney involved as there is in CHIPS cases. BMCW legal counsel is the only attorney involved in the situation.



The 2008 Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit

The Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative hosted its annual summit October 10-12, 2008 at Destiny Youth Plaza. The summit provides resources and inspiration to Milwaukee's fathers. BMCW was present to provide information to families working with us.

To find out more about the initiative, visit www.milwaukeefatherhood.com. To read a report on the past summit by the Planning Council for Health and Human Services, Inc. visit www.planningcouncil.org.